

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Tuesday, September 2, 2014, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 210, County/ City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Tammy Eagle Bull, Tom Huston, Gill Peace, Michelle Penn and Michele Tilley; (JoAnne Kissel absent).

**OTHERS IN** Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Hallie Salem of Urban Development; Tony Curp, Robert Scholz, Jeremy Hahn, Debbie White, Mark Palmer, Don Linscott and Kevin Abourezk of the Lincoln Journal Star.

Vice Chair Michelle Penn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Penn then requested a motion approving the minutes of regular meeting held August 5, 2014. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Eagle Bull and carried 5-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Kissel absent.

### **PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF "ASPEN" MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENT PROJECT, VICINITY OF 18<sup>TH</sup> & P STREETS**

Huston stated that has a conflict of interest on this item and will not be participating in this discussion as an Urban Design Committee member.

Tony Curp is Executive President of development at Aspen Heights. He thought it would be helpful to let the committee know about the company. They are a purpose-built student housing company. They have been around since 2006 and built 20 some projects of similar size. They own and operate over thirteen. They started out as a cottage-style development company. They spent the better part of last year putting together a Lincoln deal. It can be tough to put together enough land close to campus. This will be split into three housing buildings and a parking garage. They feel like this will tie in nicely. It is pretty early in the design process. They want to show some conceptual ideas of what they have done in the past. The idea was to brainstorm and get a better idea for what the City is looking for.

Robert Scholz is the Development Manager on this. They have been working on this design for around two months. They have come up with three five-story wooden structures, 617 beds total. There are several four bedroom plans. This would be a more affordable unit. They offer a bathroom with every single bedroom. They have been very successful with this floor plan.

They also have incorporated a pool, dog park and a fitness room. They are proposing a six-level parking garage across the street. They are aiming to provide 60 percent of the parking ratio in the garage.

Huston stated that dealing with four different owners in the downtown corridor has been difficult, but they have worked it out. Construction is set to start in Spring, 2015.

Huston addressed the alley in the 17-18<sup>th</sup>, P-Q block. The project had incurred an amendment at Planning Commission. Questions were asked at the time of the alley vacation application. The City preference was to vacate all, or nothing of the alley. U-Stop has a facility on that corner. They leased, they did not want to vacate. They will not be asking for a vacation.

Jeffrey Hahn continued that in keeping with the design standards, the first floor is masonry, then more of a panel look above that. He presented some examples of possible designs for five story buildings. They have a preliminary elevation, but not a final design yet. They were thinking of the first two floors in brick, with some different variation on the brick colors. Maybe an architectural panel on the corner.

Huston just wanted to get in front of the Urban Design Committee and show some general ideas.

Penn questioned if they are proposing four buildings. Hahn replied yes. Penn noted that one drawing looks a lot more modern than the one that was just showed a minute ago. It appears they are going in two different directions.

Hahn stated that they first met with Urban Development and showed them three distinct options. Since that meeting, they have had time to come up with this possibility. They would like to get some feedback and see which direction the City likes.

Peace questioned if one design is picked, will all the buildings be the same. Debbie White replied yes.

Scholz stated that they have incorporated all the design elements from buildings they have done in the past. They have included things that Lincoln likes to see in a building. They haven't nailed down the final colors yet. They have incorporated some brick. They are picking and choosing elements that they like, to come up with something that fits into the guidelines.

Curp stated that the purpose for today is to get some initial feedback.

Penn knows that there has been a lot of discussion with the Mayor and other committees regarding materials. Will this be thin brick or real brick?

Hahn replied this will be real brick and cast stone. The first levels are all masonry. There are larger windows in the clubhouse.

Peace wondered if things will be happening on the first floor of these buildings. Hahn replied that most of the clubhouse and fitness area opens up to the court yard. Most of this will be a main lobby and leasing lobby. The signature piece will be the cement-fiber panels. Scholz wanted to give the metal feel to the project.

Tilley questioned if this product has been used in Lincoln. Peace stated it is on the Marriott in a dark gray. It was also used at 8<sup>th</sup> & R and on the old Kmart on 56<sup>th</sup> & Highway 2. He thinks it is a good product. It has been used quite a bit.

Tilley questioned if the other product is cementitious board. Hahn replied it would be Hardy-panel board. Penn wondered if the joints would be accents. White replied yes. Scholz wants to get ideas on what the committee would like to see on the reveal. A combination of metal and paint has been talked about.

Peace would emphasize that the recess needs to feel stronger. The cornice height could be varied.

Eagle Bull feels it needs to be changed where the building meets the sidewalk. This seems to be a little more private. Some more recesses and depth would help create a feeling of more private spaces.

Peace mentioned the corners. They would be stronger if they came down to the ground. Zimmer asked if this material is durable enough for pedestrian level. Peace believes it is pretty durable. Eagle Bull would like to see the material brought down one more floor.

Tilley commented on creating more variety in the façade—that color isn't doing it. A few more variations would make this feels more like row houses. This feels more industrial.

Penn noted the applicant has mentioned a pool and dog park. Scholz stated the outdoor pool would have access only for residents. Huston added the building was originally U shaped to open to P Street.

Penn noted that at five stories tall, the courtyard won't see a whole lot of sun. She inquired where the dog park will be located. Scholz replied this will be only open to residents as well. There is nowhere else for the trash compactor, so it will be in the vicinity of the dog park. They need to figure out how to secure it from the compactor and the general public. It will be open from the west, so there will be sun. They don't have a concept for that yet.

Curp wondered if there were questions geared toward the building orientation. Penn can understand there are budgets to meet. It is a little hard to understand the building shapes. Curp replied the buildings have been rotated to orient them for sun.

Huston stated that we have a meeting with the Development Services Center tomorrow. They will talk about parking, the P Street design, everything.

Zimmer questioned if the applicant has a sense of how much sidewalk will remain. Scholz envisions some parallel parking. The angle parking will go away.

Huston mentioned the liner building on the garage. They met with Urban Development a few weeks ago. He believes this is a compliment building to the other buildings on P Street.

Curp reiterated they met with the City two weeks ago. The liner building is proposed for two-story residential. It will probably look like townhouses. They are open to condo them out, or sale. It depends on the market. Hahn stated they would open up to the street.

Zimmer noted that this development is before this committee because this is a redevelopment seeking TIF assistance. Huston added that hopefully, they can add some elevations in a month.

Peace wondered about the parking garage. Curp stated it will be a six-story parking garage.

Peace questioned if they could pull the vertical circulation in to the liner building. He would like to see some treatment of the corner. Hahn stated the idea is to mirror what we are doing across the street, onto the liner building.

Huston will talk to Public Works about access in and out of the garage. The Planning Commission thought it should be primarily on 18<sup>th</sup> Street. That was part of the deal that was cut with the owner of the DuTeau building. They needed parking also.

Mark Palmer stated that the alley has been vacated, but building access needs to be maintained.

Zimmer would like the applicant to speak about the parking in the courtyard of the northwest building. Scholz wanted to offer them up to perhaps to students. One or two need to be handicap accessible. They could offer an extra amenity for those students who want a designated parking space. It could turn into a volleyball court. They are still toying around with ideas.

Scholz thinks it is a great opportunity to bring in some handicap accessible stalls. Perhaps they put in a few more.

Huston noted this is two block distance from campus. He doesn't foresee a lot of cars moving from the garage.

Penn thinks that this is urban design we are interested in. The question is how does it interact with the street and the people on the street. She is trying to picture if the pool is on the other side, a volleyball court would be cool. It's all in the middle and we don't want to share, is the

impression it would give. It would be fun to have people walk by and see. It doesn't seem like it has much interaction with the streetscape. Changing the orientation would feel like it is interacting with the street. She would still love to see the pool be visible. A corridor or some amenity being seen would be good advertising.

Tilley noted the parking spaces. The one building gets jinked on the green space.

Eagle Bull noted if you are going to provide handicap parking, it should be for more than just one. The benefit isn't there for what you are taking away. Her other concern is how it meets the street, but more for an interaction with the street level.

Zimmer addressed the Downtown Design Standards and whether these buildings could orient their courtyards towards the street. That isn't allowed in the heart of the P Street retail area but he questioned whether this area east of 17<sup>th</sup> Street should be treated the same. Building 1 at the 18<sup>th</sup> and Q isn't under the same standard. If the building were rotated 90 degrees, there would still be a strong street wall on Q Street. This could open it more to the street. He continued that on P Street east of 17<sup>th</sup>, you are not in the center of a retail zone. You are on the east edge of retail. Even Building 3 at P and Antelope Valley Parkway does not have a large opening to the courtyard and reorienting it 180 degrees would not great a long gap in the street wall.

Tilley questioned if this project would fall under the Downtown Design guidelines. Zimmer replied yes, at it is zoned B-4. In terms of interpreting the Downtown Design Standards, he doesn't think this design could be approved at his level based on street adherence to the standards, but the Planning Director or the Urban Design Committee have authority to interpret the intent of the standards more broadly.

Peace thinks it would function better if it were flipped. Eagle Bull agreed. Penn would hate to think that we are so strict that we couldn't recommend this building be rotated. Zimmer stated the owner is seeking input. It is his understanding that the committee is encouraging that Building 1 at 18<sup>th</sup> & Q could rotate so the courtyard opening is facing a street. Building 3 on the southeast could be rotated 180 degrees to have the opening face P Street.

Huston believes we have heard some good ideas. He would suggest they will look at rotating the building and perhaps seek a waiver to downtown design standards.

Tilley believes will be a nice addition to the City.

Penn is always interested in materials. Some samples would be nice.

### **Miscellaneous and staff report**

Zimmer stated that he has been working with the Mayor's office on getting a new member for this committee. They are trying to focus on a landscape architect, if possible. There are some

on the Mayor' list. He will talk to people and see who is interested. He would welcome any suggestions from the committee members. If someone is interested, they need to go onto Mayor's website and apply.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

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